

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Monday, March 6, 2023

**Senate Bill 1157: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC AGENCIES - Support**

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Robert Perez, I am a Lieutenant Supervising Judicial Marshal in the State of CT Judicial Branch. I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 1157: An Act Concerning Revisions to the Freedom of Information Act Concerning Employees of Public Agencies:

I first would like to thank the committee for raising SB 1157. As someone who is a Lieutenant Supervising Judicial Marshal employed by the Judicial Branch, for 22 years this is a bill that is very important to me. I love working for the people of Connecticut, but I would never want that work to put myself, my family, or my co-workers at risk because someone abused the FOIA process.

Currently, I am the Lieutenant Supervising Judicial Marshal overseeing the Court Security and Operations at Waterbury JD Courthouse. I supervise 8 Judicial Marshals and a Sergeant and we provide the security and safety to the Judges, Staff/Employees, Prisoners, and Visitors. We are in charge of maintaining Law and Order within our Courthouse and Courtrooms. Within our duties we deal with Prisoners that are awaiting trials with crimes that they have allegedly committed and take into custody those that the Court remands into our custody.

The nature of our work is very important and crucial to the Judicial Process. We ensure the safety of the accused during this process and the safety of those who partake within our courtrooms which includes victims and their families. We provide a safe and secured environment screening everyone who enters our courts. We work with other Law Enforcement Agencies regarding intel that can disrupt or cause harm to the Judicial Process.

The FOIA process can be abused to harass or harm any of the Lieutenants or Judicial Marshals assigned to provide security to our Judges, Staff, and Visitors. Additionally, through knowledge of our personal information, it can be harmful to our family's safety.

The misuse of the FOIA process to obtain my residential address can lead to someone knowing where I live. This can create an unsafe set of circumstances for not just me and my co-workers, but my families, as well. The release of residential address information can result in threats of bodily harm, vandalism of personal properties (I.E. Vehicles and Home), families being harassed or even assaulted.

Past experiences have shown us that dealing with information that has fallen into the wrong hands has led to Law Enforcements Officers being harassed, assaulted, and even killed. Also, within the work that we do,

Lieutenants/Judicial Marshals families can be threatened to influence and provide certain access to those incarcerated through intimidation.

While it is true that personal information can be found in places other than a FOIA release, sometimes all it takes is an internet search, that should not be an excuse for the state to help facilitate the release of that information. The open and transparent operation of state agencies is essential to our democracy and at the foundation of the idea of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. However, that does not mean my home address needs to be accessible through a FOIA request. For my safety and security, as well as the safety and security of my family and co-workers, I urge you to support Senate Bill 1157.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Robert Perez
State of Connecticut Lieutenant Supervising Judicial
Judicial Branch.